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ALBERTA CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

MISSION & PROGRAMS

YOUNG OFFENDER SERVICES

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MISSION STATEMENT

IT IS THE MISSION OF THE YOUNG OFFENDER PROGRAM OF ALBERTA CORRECTIONAL SERVICES TO BALANCE THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO COMMIT OFFENCES WITH THE PROTECTION OF SOCIETY. YOUNG PEOPLE ARE ENCOURAGED TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR AND ARE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME LAW ABIDING CITIZENS THROUGH COMMUNITY AND CUSTODIAL PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO MEET THEIR REHABILITATIVE NEEDS.

THE YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT

In all societies the system of justice evolves over time. Various factors influence social values which, in turn, are reflected in legislation. In Canada, the *Young Offenders Act* (Y.O.A.), proclaimed in 1984, represents a fundamental shift in the way society deals with young persons who break the law. The Act was the result of over twenty years of study and consultation between federal, provincial and territorial governments. It replaced the *Juvenile Delinquents Act* (J.D.A.), originally proclaimed in 1908 and last revised in 1929. Administered across the country by each province and territory, the Y.O.A. attempts to provide continuity and balance between legal process, protection of society and treatment or rehabilitation of young offenders and, as such, brings significant reform to Canada's youth justice system.

Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, young people in Canada were tried, convicted and imprisoned under the same system as adults. By the 1850's, however, it was generally recognized that this single-tiered approach was inappropriate and over the next twenty years considerable legislation was introduced which provided for separate prisons and special trial procedures for young persons. In the decades which followed, the debate intensified between those concerned with the "rescue and rehabilitation" of delinquent children and those whose primary concern was the criminal activities of juveniles. It was felt that the family was responsible for the proper upbringing of children, but when the proper family environment was lacking, society had to provide a substitute environment which would give youth the proper guidance and direction.

In keeping with this philosophy, the *Juvenile Delinquents Act* (1908) established the state as a "parent" to misdirected children in need of "help, guidance and proper supervision". Under the J.D.A., various behaviours had been identified as "delinquencies" when they were exhibited by young people. A "juvenile delinquent" was defined as a young person over the age of seven and under the age of sixteen years who violated any provision of the *Criminal Code*, dominion or provincial statute, or bylaw or ordinance of a municipality. Under this legislation, however, each province was allowed to vary the upper age limit so that differences in the "age of criminality" or age of entry into the adult justice system varied from province to province. "Juvenile delinquent" was also a young person "guilty of sexual immorality or any similar type of vice".

Although the J.D.A. provided sentencing options which included probation supervision, placement in a foster home or training school, and "further other conditions as may be deemed advisable", the Act left the sentence length and penalty open to interpretation by individual judges. In cases where young persons were committed to a foster home or training school, they had to be brought back before the court to be released. The judge would consider reports from the facility, probation officer or school and could make a decision without hearing further evidence. For young persons in a residential facility, this could mean the extension of their stay for an indefinite period of time, or "indeterminate sentencing".

The Act also specified that proceedings with respect to a child, including trial and disposition of the case, were to be as informal as circumstances would permit with regard for the proper administration of justice. It was also specified, however, that no adjudication or other action of a juvenile court with respect to a child should be quashed or set aside because of any informality or irregularity where it

would appear that this disposition was in the best interest of the child.

In summary, the J.D.A. was rehabilitation-oriented and gave the courts in each province and territory wide discretionary power in handling cases. Although concerns arose with various aspects of the Act, including indeterminate sentencing and definitions of offences, movement for changes to the Act did not begin to take place in any concerted fashion until the 1960's.

The *Young Offenders Act* introduced new concepts to the youth justice system including a fixed age limit of twelve to seventeen years inclusive across Canada, alternative measures and a specific range of sentences which are called dispositions under the Act. The community and custodial dispositions available to the youth court are made for a fixed period of time and vary depending on the seriousness of the offence and the circumstance and needs of both the young person and society. The Act allows for the right to appeal a disposition or finding of guilt similar to that available to adults under the Criminal Code. In addition, a young person cannot be committed to custody or given a disposition for a status offence, such as "sexual immorality" which would not apply to adults. The youth court maintains control over the length and type of disposition. Although provisions exist for review of dispositions under various sections of the Act, such review applications must go before a judge. There is no automatic remission or early release from custody unless court ordered. Examples of reviews of custodial dispositions include reviews from secure to open custody and from open or secure custody to probation. In all cases, a young person must have demonstrated sufficient progress while in custody to warrant a change in disposition. Specific procedures for destruction of young offender records and safeguards for the anonymity of accused young persons are provided within the framework of the Act.

The Y.O.A. represents an attempt to strike a balance between the rights and responsibilities of young persons and the right of the community to be protected. The Act recognizes the rights of young people to treatment based on their special needs, while emphasizing the importance of legal process. Basic rights and procedural safeguards are guaranteed for twelve to seventeen year old offenders, which were previously unavailable under the J.D.A.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUNG OFFENDER PROGRAM IN ALBERTA

Responsibility for the administration of the youth justice system in Alberta has shifted over the years. In 1951, the Department of the Attorney General established a Juvenile Offenders Branch which provided the province's first probation service. In 1970, the responsibility for juvenile probation was transferred to the Department of Health and Social Development (which later became the Department of Social Services) where it remained until the proclamation of the Y.O.A. in 1984. The Department of Social Services had joint responsibility for both child welfare and juvenile delinquency matters prior to 1984.

The Government of Alberta decided early in 1983 that the Department of the Solicitor General, Correctional Services Division, would be given the mandate to develop and administer programs for young offenders under the new federal legislation. To ensure successful implementation of the decision, an interdepartmental committee was formed consisting of representatives from the departments of Social Services, Attorney General and Solicitor General. This committee was responsible for preparing a coordinated plan for the transfer of facilities and resources from the Department of Social Services to the Department of the Solicitor General.

In addition to the interdepartmental committee, the Department of the Solicitor General also commissioned an analysis of custody bed space and appointed task groups to study critical areas related to the delivery of programs. In December of 1983, an implementation committee was established to coordinate the work of the task groups and ensure all implementation duties were completed in time for the proclamation of the Y.O.A.

Implementation took place in two phases: April, 1984 for the twelve to fifteen year old group and April, 1985 for the sixteen and seventeen year olds. The Y.O.A. allowed provinces to phase in the age provisions due to differences in the age of adult criminality between provinces and territories allowed under the J.D.A. It was noted that since the adult age of criminality had been sixteen in Alberta for both boys and girls prior to the Y.O.A., the Department of the Solicitor General had prior experience in dealing with this group.

Alberta Correctional Services provided extensive training for staff who would be working with young offenders. Community Corrections staff who up to that time had dealt solely with adults, were trained in youth court procedures and legal documentation, and were familiarized with existing services for youth. Training was implemented in phases beginning in early 1984 and included district directors, community corrections administrators and probation officers. Up until 1987, when urban offices developed a specialist model, young offenders were supervised out of Community Corrections district offices in both urban and rural locations by probation officers who carried mixed caseloads of adult and young offenders.

During the first few years following the proclamation of the Y.O.A., Alberta Correctional Services utilized several converted young offender facilities to address both open and secure custody needs. During this time secure custody and remand facilities were constructed in Edmonton and Calgary.

In addition, numerous group homes that had been utilized by the Department of Social Services were contracted to the Department of the Solicitor General as open custody facilities and added to the existing bed space. Alternative facilities have also been provided for selected open custody offenders in the form of custody homes run by private individuals and emphasizing a family atmosphere. In Edmonton and Calgary, special young offender offices were opened and staffed with probation officers to deal exclusively with young offenders.

Alberta Correctional Services emphasizes the involvement of other agencies, departments and the community in addressing the needs of young offenders in Alberta. It is through their input that programs and services offered will evolve to meet the challenge of providing for the multitude of concerns presented by this group.

PRINCIPLES OF PROGRAM DELIVERY

IN ADDITION TO THE PRINCIPLES DERIVED FROM THE *YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT*, ALBERTA CORRECTIONAL SERVICES RELIES ON A SET OF ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT YOUNG OFFENDERS IN DEVELOPING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO CARRY OUT ITS MANDATE. THEY ARE THAT YOUNG OFFENDERS:

- REQUIRE PROPER GUIDANCE, SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION FROM ADULT ROLE MODELS;
- NEED OPPORTUNITIES TO EXERCISE REASONABLE CONTROL OVER THEIR OWN LIVES;
- HAVE DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS IN THE SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL AREAS;
- ARE PART OF CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND FAMILY SYSTEMS WHICH INFLUENCE THEIR BEHAVIOUR;
- OFTEN HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS BASED ON ETHNIC OR FAMILY BACKGROUND AND PHYSICAL, MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL CONDITIONS;
- CAN BE EXPECTED TO LEARN RESPONSIBLE DECISION MAKING; AND
- ARE TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS.

OBJECTIVES OF PROGRAM SERVICE

All community based and custodial programs are provided in a humane, caring fashion in which each young offender is treated with respect, courtesy and dignity. The objectives of these programs and services are to:

- ensure that young offenders under court order are sufficiently controlled or supervised to protect the safety and security of the public;
- adhere to the principle of the least restrictive level of intervention in administering the disposition of the court, in preparing predisposition reports and in making application for youth court review of disposition;
- involve the families of young offenders at the predisposition report and pre-trial stages prior to sentencing and in the case planning process after disposition;
- ensure that the original disposition of the youth court is properly fulfilled and that it is reviewed as the needs and circumstances of the offender change;
- provide sufficient community based and custodial resources to meet the sentencing needs of the youth court as outlined in the *Young Offenders Act;*
- ensure community and custodial resources are available in the province to address regional needs;
- provide specialized custodial and community services for native young offenders based on their high representation in the system and their special cultural needs. The development of services to native young offenders is done in consultation with native communities and agencies;
- involve community members, including non-governmental agencies, to enhance or supplement the programs and services provided by the program;
- involve other government departments in jointly providing programs and services to young offenders or in carrying out the principles of the *Young Offenders Act;*
- complete thorough social histories and, where required, psychiatric and psychological assessments on young offenders appropriate to their degree of involvement in the system or the need of the young offender;
- provide a consistent standard of service in all aspects of program delivery;
- provide opportunities for young offenders to learn more positive behaviour;
- provide opportunities for young offenders to learn personal accountability and the concept of individual responsibility; and
- select staff who have an aptitude and skill for working with young persons.

COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS PROGRAMS

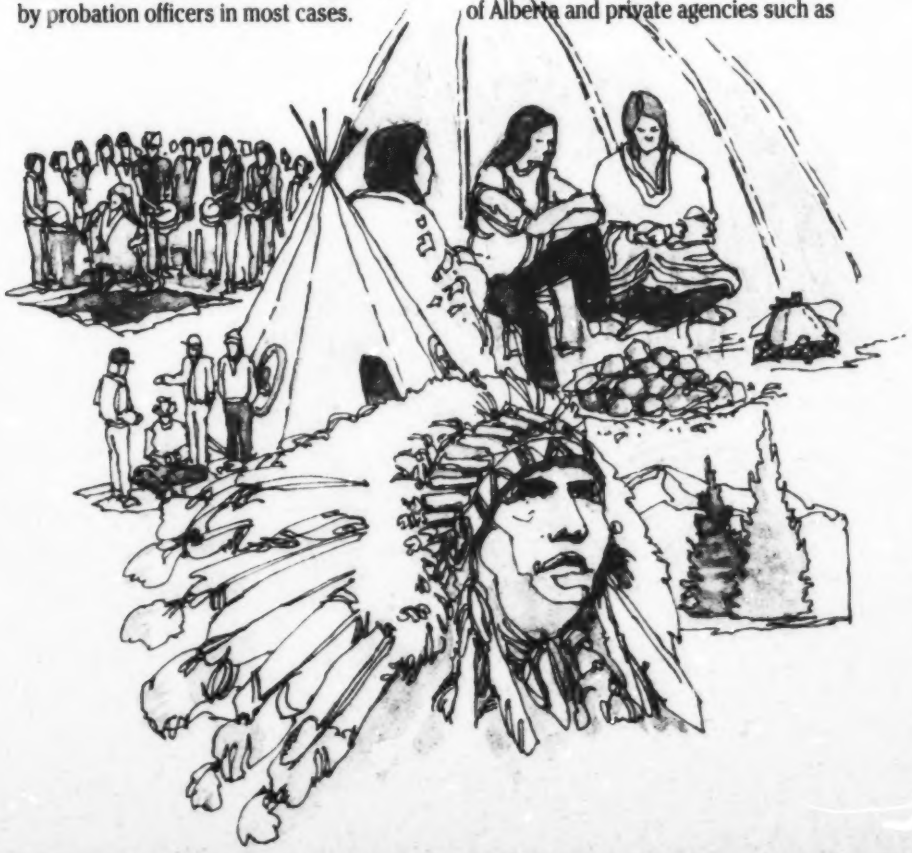
INTRODUCTION

Alberta Correctional Services believes that young offenders are usually best dealt with in community settings with the least level of intervention consistent with the needs of the young person and the protection of society.

Community based programs for young offenders are offered through a network of Community Corrections district offices staffed by probation officers and located across the province. Young offenders who receive bail orders, probation orders or community service work dispositions are supervised by probation officers. In addition, probation officers complete investigative reports for custodial facilities and at the request of the youth court. Those young offenders on temporary release to a community residence are also supervised by probation officers in most cases.

Although offices in rural locations also provide adult community corrections programs, every effort is made to ensure that young offenders do not associate with adult offenders. In Edmonton and Calgary, there are specific offices which deal exclusively with young offenders. In Calgary, young offender supervision is contracted to the City of Calgary's Department of Social Services.

Probation officers who supervise young offenders bound by community dispositions act as a link between young persons and the many agencies and government departments which deal with youth and their families. These may include the Department of Family and Social Services, Canada Employment and Immigration, Health, Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, Native Counselling Services of Alberta and private agencies such as



psychologists, psychiatrists and educational services.

In the process of monitoring compliance with the conditions of a probation order, probation officers often assume a referral agent role once it has been determined which program or service would best meet the needs of the young person and the court. In addition, non-profit organizations are the recipients of services through work completed by young offenders given community service hours as a disposition.

Guidelines for the supervision of young offenders participating in community programs are detailed in a comprehensive policies and procedures manual which serves to consolidate and establish provincial standards for offender supervision, casework documentation and investigative reports. The manual is subject to ongoing revision as necessary.

ALTERNATIVE MEASURES

The Y.O.A. provides for the use of "alternative measures" in place of judicial proceedings. These programs aim to reduce the number of young people appearing before the court. Instead, emphasis is placed on restitution and victim involvement in an attempt to foster community awareness and lessen the stigma of court proceedings for first-time offenders. Guidelines for this program in Alberta have been developed jointly by the departments of the Attorney General and Solicitor General.

To be considered eligible for the program, a young person must have no record of prior findings of guilt and can participate in the program only once. Investigating police agencies may recommend suitable young people to the program instead of issuing an appearance notice to face the charge before the court. Offences for which a young person may be referred to the program mostly include those punishable by summary conviction, usually minor property offences. The actual decision to refer young persons to the program is made by the local Crown Agents (prosecutors), and is based on an assessment of police reports concerning the alleged offence, police recommendations and criminal record information. In some cases, a young person may be referred to the program at the crown's discretion after a charge has been laid, but prior to a finding or plea of guilt.

Participation in an alternative measures program is voluntary, but young people are required to accept responsibility for the alleged offence and must consent to the conditions of any alternative measures agreement which is established.

Alternative measures agreements are negotiated following an interview with the young person and his or her legal guardians. Prior to the interview, the probation officer contacts the victim(s) of the alleged offence to determine their interest in receiving personal service, monetary compensation and/or a personal or a written apology from the young person. The agreement may stipulate any or a combination of the above. In addition, the young person may be required to perform community service or participate in counselling. Agreements are not to include more than three conditions and cannot exceed a three month duration. In several locations throughout the province, this program is contracted to municipalities and private agencies.

Successful completion of the alternative measures agreement allows the young person to avoid formal prosecution. Failure to meet the stipulated conditions, however, can result in the young person being charged with the offence and brought before youth court.

YOUTH COURT SERVICES

Alberta Correctional Services, through Community Corrections offices, provides the youth court with various types of reports which assist the court in verifying or assessing a young person's circumstances. These reports are completed in the following areas:

- **PRE-TRIAL SERVICES**

  This program allows eligible young people the opportunity to be released from temporary detention into the care of a responsible adult where appropriate. Once in the community, young persons may be supervised by probation officers who monitor the conditions of release specified by the court and, if necessary, inform the court of violations. Where requested by the youth court, a background report is prepared on those young offenders remanded in custody and awaiting further court appearances. The intent is to provide the court with information regarding community support to facilitate release as monitored above.

- **PREDISPOSITION REPORTS**

  In order to obtain more information about a young offender, the youth court may request a predisposition report (P.D.R.). This report is prepared by a probation officer and includes social history information as well as an assessment of his or her circumstances and recommendations for programs.

The report format is standardized to ensure consistent service across the province. It assists the youth court in deciding on a suitable disposition and provides the basis for casework intervention should the young person receive a custodial or supervised community disposition. The court will ordinarily request a P.D.R. prior to imposing a custodial disposition. In addition, a P.D.R. is required for cases in which application has been made to transfer a young person to adult court for trial.

- **PROGRESS REPORTS**

These reports accompany all applications to review a youth court disposition. Depending on the type of review initiated, the young person's progress in the community or in custody is summarized.

A situation in which a review of a community disposition would be initiated is where a young person was unable to comply with a specific probation condition through circumstances beyond his or her control, such as inability to complete community service work due to an injury or illness.

Reviews of custodial dispositions are initiated when a young person has made sufficient progress in custody to warrant a change in disposition, either from secure to open custody, or from open or secure custody to probation. This type of progress report details behaviour while in custody as well as on community outings and presents a case for modifying the original disposition. It also includes an assessment of the community support that will be available if the young offender is released onto probation.

PROBATION

Probation is a disposition which allows the young offender to be supervised in the community by a probation officer. A term of probation supervision offers the young offender the opportunity to access community resources such as counselling, school, treatment and employment opportunities in order to address concerns which may have led to conflict with the law.

During the first meeting between the probation officer and the young offender, the conditions of the probation order along with the possible consequences of failing to comply with the conditions are explained. Young offenders are then classified according to personal need and the risk they may present to the community. This information is necessary to determine appropriate supervision levels and program requirements. If no predisposition report was completed, information regarding their circumstances is collected during the first interview for documentation in the form of a report called an offender history. A case plan which includes objectives for the period of supervision is developed during the first month of supervision. Case plans serve as an outline for casework and may include referrals to a variety of community agencies. Case plans are reviewed regularly to ensure that probation conditions are met and needs which arise are identified and addressed.

Probation supervision is carried out through a process which focuses on guidance, control and assistance in the community. Parents are encouraged to become involved in this process by providing information to assist in the preparation of predisposition reports and offender histories, notifying the probation officer of any changes in the young offender's personal circumstances and assisting in providing supervision to ensure that the conditions of the probation order are met. Family involvement in the supervision process is consistent with the principles of the Y.O.A. which state that parents have responsibility for the care and supervision of their children.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

As a condition of a probation order or as a separate community service disposition, young offenders may be required to complete a fixed number of hours for a charitable or non-profit public service agency. Placements are coordinated by a probation officer and can include such projects as work for senior citizens, clean-up of recreational areas or helping in hospitals or community leagues. Job sites are approved by the probation officer and the young offender's work is supervised by agency personnel and monitored by the probation officer. Hours of work are structured to accommodate the young offender's school and employment commitments.

SERVICE AND COMPENSATION

Personal service, compensation and restitution are disposition alternatives which provide tangible ways in which young offenders can repay the victim(s) for their losses. These programs may be dispositions in themselves or conditions of a probation order.

Personal service includes completion of projects designed to benefit the victim, and is determined on the basis of information provided in a predisposition report or means/ability report. Work is supervised by the victim in conjunction with a probation officer. Compensation involves payment of a fixed amount which is determined by the court and serves to compensate the victim for damage to property, loss of income or support. Restitution is the return of any property acquired by a young person as the result of commission of an offence. As with personal service, compensation and restitution are often determined on the basis of information presented in a predisposition report.

Probation officers monitor young offenders participating in the above programs. In the area of personal service, the probation officer is present at the first meeting with the young offender and the victim, and maintains contact with both parties until the specified work has been completed. In cases where young offenders have been ordered to make restitution or compensation, probation officers will monitor the return of goods or the payment of a specified sum.

FINE OPTION

When young offenders are given a fine as a disposition, they have the option of participating in the Fine Option Program. This program gives young offenders the opportunity to work for a charitable or non-profit agency in lieu of cash payment of the fine. A voucher system is used so that no cash transactions are involved. While participating in the program, young offenders receive supervision from a probation officer and personnel at the agency sponsoring the work placement.

Unlike legislation for adult offenders which provides an automatic "in default" period of incarceration for non-payment of fines, the Y.O.A. requires that young persons appear before the youth court to address the failure to pay a fine. As a result, the young person may have an alternate disposition imposed. An additional component to the Fine Option Program is provided for young offenders serving custodial dispositions in that they may work off their fines or other dispositions while in custody.

TEMPORARY RELEASE

The *Young Offenders Act* provides legislative authority to grant young offenders supervised releases from open or secure custody. Where it is consistent with the protection of society, a young offender may be granted a supervised release from open or secure custody.

Open custody facilities include government operated institutions and privately operated group or custody homes; secure custody facilities are government operated.

Temporary releases may be granted for medical, humanitarian or reintegration purposes and may take one of two forms: a temporary release from custody for a maximum of fifteen days, or a day release from an open or secure custody facility in order that a young offender may attend school or training, continue employment or take part in a self-improvement program. There is no maximum length for day releases provided the young offender returns to a custody facility each night.

Temporary release plays a significant role in the reintegration of young persons into the community, and serves as an indication of their suitability for an application to review a custodial disposition before the youth court. A temporary release can give young offenders an opportunity to try services and programs identified as potentially beneficial in enhancing the social circumstances from which they came and to which they will return. When temporary release is granted, young offenders must agree to abide by conditions established to govern their behaviour in the community. If the young offenders do not abide by these conditions, they will be returned to custody or transferred to an institutional setting if residing in a group or custody home.

ASSISTANT PROBATION OFFICERS

Assistant probation officers provide supervision to young offenders in areas which are not easily accessible to the staff of an established Community Corrections office or contracted agency. Similar to probation officers, they are responsible for delivering a range of community programs.

By recruiting and training community members, Alberta Correctional Services is able to offer young offenders the assistance of individuals who are familiar with local resources and community conditions. Assistant probation officers maintain regular contact with supervising probation officers and assume similar responsibility to professional staff. They usually supervise fewer offenders than professional staff.

Many assistant probation officers are natives who provide community corrections services on their home reserves. They may also assist with translation in native languages. The Assistant Probation Officer Program offers participants the opportunity for work experience while simultaneously providing a necessary community service.

SERVICES FOR NATIVE OFFENDERS

Native young persons are over represented in both community corrections programs and custodial facilities relative to their proportional numbers in the general population. The situation is most pronounced in northern Alberta. In dealing with issues concerning native young offenders, Alberta Correctional Services has developed a range of community and custodial programs which reflect the aspirations of native people and communities to be responsible for their young people.

Basic to programs and services are the principles that, where possible, programs should be close to native communities, be staffed and managed by native persons/agencies, and native agencies and communities should be consulted to assist in identifying needs and developing programs. In addition, other departments or levels of government should be consulted where practical and Alberta Correctional Services staff trained to have an awareness and appreciation of native culture.

Alberta Correctional Services has contracted with Native Counselling Services of Alberta (N.C.S.A.) to provide a variety of services to native young offenders. N.C.S.A. is a non-profit agency whose prime objective is to gain fair and equitable treatment for Native people involved with the legal system.

N.C.S.A. provides courtworkers in both urban and rural communities. These courtworkers offer support for young offenders appearing in court by explaining procedures and making referrals. Young offenders appearing in court often lack a basic understanding of their rights under the Act. Native courtworkers act as a link between the court and the young offenders, helping them to obtain legal counsel and acting as interpreter in some cases. In several areas throughout the province, N.C.S.A. is contracted to provide supervision for young offenders given probation and other community dispositions. Staff who are in the role of probation officers to native youth provide specialized services. They are well acquainted with other organizations whose mandates encompass

native youth and their families, and act as liaison between the young offender and these agencies. In Edmonton and Slave Lake, Alberta Correctional Services has contracted with N.C.S.A. to operate special open custody group homes for native young offenders.

All young offender centres provide a variety of culturally appropriate services for native young offenders as part of ongoing programs within the centre. These include regular visits from native elders, sweetgrass ceremonies, sweat lodges, native cultural awareness activities and visits to native community events. Nearby reserves are encouraged to "adopt" a young offender centre to provide volunteers, advice and program assistance.

Increasingly, Alberta Correctional Services is working directly with reserve leaders and administrators and Metis organizations to develop programs to meet the needs of Native young offenders. Where appropriate, contracts for service delivery will be made with local band or settlement administrators.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers can play a significant role in helping young offenders to establish productive and law abiding lifestyles. Working out of either a Community Corrections office or custody facility, volunteers provide support and encouragement to young offenders as well as assisting staff with activities which fall within the volunteers particular area of expertise.

Over one thousand volunteers have been recruited and trained to work in Alberta Correctional Services. Of these, approximately one-third work with young offenders in probation offices or young offender centres. A number of community agencies and groups also sponsor volunteers who provide services to the young offender population. These agencies include the Salvation Army, Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous, Native Counselling Services of Alberta, Catholic Social Services, The John Howard Society and many other local groups and agencies.

Persons who choose to become volunteers are screened before they are accepted. They must provide personal references and submit to a criminal record check. Once accepted, volunteers receive both formal and on the job training designed to familiarize them with the criminal justice system and prepare them for their responsibilities. A contractual agreement, signed by the volunteers and their immediate supervisors, ensures that responsibilities, hours of service and reporting lines are clearly defined. Volunteers must initially make a six-month commitment which most extend to a full year or more.

Volunteers come from different backgrounds and age groups and perform varied tasks. In Community Corrections offices, they are usually involved in providing supplementary supervision to probationers or offenders participating in the Community Service Program. They may also provide special services such as court liaison, clerical assistance, escort provision or language translation. In young offender centres, volunteers may work as tutors, recreation assistants, counsellors or arts and crafts instructors. They may also assist staff in providing group programs in areas such as job skills or job search techniques, self help or addictions counselling.

The commitment and involvement of volunteers ensures direct and current input by the community in delivery of programs and services to young offenders. Volunteers act as role models for young offenders and help to address their individual needs.

CUSTODY FACILITIES FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS

INTRODUCTION

Although institutional settings are necessary for those who are remanded and for those in secure custody, most young offenders can benefit from community programs such as alternative measures, pretrial supervision, probation and community service. For those in custody, the least restrictive type of facility should be used unless the offender's present behaviour poses a serious risk to the community. *The Young Offenders Act* provides for three types of custody to address program and security needs: temporary detention at the pretrial stage and secure or open custody for offenders given custody dispositions. Alberta Correctional Services has established a variety of custody facilities in order to meet the varied needs of young offenders. These range from custody homes (similar to foster homes) and group homes to various styles of institutional settings and treatment facilities in as many locations across the province as possible.

The Provincial Placement Authority of Alberta Correctional Services is responsible for placement and movement of young offenders throughout the province who are remanded in custody or receive a custodial disposition. When a young offender is given a custody disposition, the Placement Authority will endeavour to ensure that the custody placement is best suited to accommodate the individual needs of the young offender. Factors which are considered in determining the appropriate placement for the young offender include type of custody, age, security risk, custody history, type of offence, degree of supervision, treatment required, program needs and the proximity of the placement to significant family and community resources. If a young offender has been placed in a custody facility and it is determined that another facility may be more appropriate, a transfer is approved as soon as possible. In addition, the Placement Authority assists in arranging transfers between provinces. The location of all offenders in custody is monitored on computer.

Once placed in a custody facility, a young person is provided with an opportunity to develop skills and work on problem areas in a structured setting. Staff are encouraged to develop positive and caring relationships with young offenders in order to assist them in developing pro-social behaviour. In fostering these behaviours, staff use positive reinforcement, rewards and encouragement within level systems of gradually increasing privileges. The focus of these programs is to prevent and de-escalate problem behaviour and situations.

Upon placement, consideration is given to problem areas a young offender will need to work on prior to returning to the community. Individual needs are identified and summarized in a case plan developed by a youth worker in the custody facility. Programs that are offered in centres and other facilities are designed to assist young offenders in meeting their case plan objectives. Community resources are also utilized and the appropriate programs are incorporated into individual case plans. The intent is to address issues which may have contributed to the offender's illegal behaviour and thereby facilitate successful reintegration into the community.

YOUNG OFFENDER CENTRES

Young offender centres are government operated institutional custodial resources. They include several recently opened facilities built especially for young offenders as well as some prior child welfare institutions transferred from the Department of Social Services for use as young offender centres. While the centres vary considerably in size, each offers health care services, a skills development program, alcohol and other drug information sessions, work experience, spiritual services and a comprehensive school program. School programs are offered through three way contracts between the Departments of Education and Solicitor General and a local school board or educational institution. School programs within centres provide for small classes with attention to individual needs and offer a full range of programs from elementary to high school, including special remedial courses.

EDMONTON YOUNG OFFENDER CENTRE

The Edmonton Young Offender Centre (E.Y.O.C.) is designed to accommodate young persons held in temporary detention, remanded or placed in secure custody. Officially opened in October 1988 and located in north Edmonton, the Centre's design is based on the results of extensive research into similar facilities in other jurisdictions. The facility incorporates sophisticated yet unobtrusive security features and offers ample space for education, work and recreation programs. An advisory board made up of professionals involved with youth has been set up to provide input into addressing the needs of residents.

Each of the eight residential units provides space for dining, private interviews, passive recreation and has small outdoor courtyards exclusive to that unit. Accommodation is provided in primarily single and some double occupancy rooms with seven units reserved for males and one for females. A small segregation unit consisting of four self-contained secure rooms is used for short periods of time to house offenders who have been determined to be an immediate danger to themselves or others.

A full range of health care services are provided including those of nursing staff, a doctor, a dentist, psychologists and a psychiatrist. Upon admission to the Centre, a mandatory information series presented to young offenders as part of orientation includes topics such as centre and unit regulations, programs, visits, daily routines, appeals, reviews and releases and the casework system.

In order to effect changes in identified problem areas, a variety of programs, structured activities and interactions are incorporated into the daily routine. These programs range from basic life skills to more advanced educational programs using centre staff, volunteers and community resources to provide services.

The school program is operated under contract by the Alberta Vocational Centre

and offers junior and senior high school level academic and vocational programs. Life skills programs address problems encountered in daily living and a work program is available whereby offenders can earn money to pay for fines or complete hours toward community service dispositions. A recreation program complements the school's physical education program and is designed to teach constructive leisure time skills with an emphasis on teamwork and fairness.

Since E.Y.O.C. serves Edmonton and all of northern Alberta, the facility has a high concentration of native young offenders. Native programs are, therefore, an integral part of this overall program plan. A Native Program Advisory Board with community representation assists with program development. Native agencies, resource people and elders provide services which may include group outings to native agencies and activities. The Centre has ongoing monthly visits by native elders and a sweat lodge has recently been constructed for use by interested native offenders. Of special note are sweetgrass ceremonies conducted by elders, in keeping with the emphasis on native awareness and native spirituality.

Specialized native program coordinators at the Centre oversee the development of services for native young offenders, acting as a link between the young offender, the Centre and community resources for native youth. Time is scheduled each week for native programming with guest speakers, discussion and group participation. A committee of native offenders has also been established to help provide orientation for other native offenders, particularly those from isolated northern areas of the province.

FACTS

Opened: 1988

Classification: Secure Custody and Temporary Detention

CALGARY YOUNG OFFENDER CENTRE

Calgary Young Offender Centre is one of the two new young offender centres which opened in 1988. Similar in design and function to the Edmonton Young Offender Centre, the facility incorporates the same unobtrusive security features. Located in northwest Calgary, the Centre is composed of seven residential units which serve assessment/detention, sentenced and remand, special needs, serious behaviour problems and prerelease program functions.

Each unit has space for dining, private interviews, passive recreation, single and double occupancy bedrooms and its own outdoor courtyard. A full range of health care, recreation and other programs are provided which include Westview School operated by the Calgary Board of Education, life skills, work program, a substance abuse program and native programming as needed. Health care resources include nursing staff, a doctor, dentist, contracted and staff psychologists and a psychiatrist. Upon admission, young offenders are given an orientation to the Centre and placed into programs designed to facilitate re-entry into the community.

All programs offered within the Centre are designed to assist offenders in making changes in identified problem areas and are incorporated into the daily routine. Program delivery is accomplished by using centre staff, volunteers and community resources. The Centre has a professional advisory board which provides input on young offender program issues.

Examples of programs which address specific problem areas are the special needs unit and the substance abuse program. Both programs have particular staff selected to work in these areas because of special interest or expertise. The special needs unit accommodates disturbed young offenders whose behaviour needs to be stabilized and incorporates individual program and treatment plans. Once behaviour has stabilized, offenders join the Centre population or are transferred to appropriate facilities.

The substance abuse program runs for two weeks and was developed to address a need for more intensive alcohol and other drug counselling in a residential setting. Following completion of the program which focuses on understanding problems and developing coping skills, young offenders are encouraged to attend outpatient programs offered by the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission for support and follow-up once in the community.

FACTS

Opened: 1988

Classification: Secure Custody and Temporary Detention

LETHBRIDGE YOUNG OFFENDER CENTRE

Formerly a Youth Assessment Centre under the Department of Social Services, the Lethbridge Young Offender Centre accommodates both male and female young offenders in temporary detention, on remand or serving a short disposition of secure custody. Although the facility is small and resembles a private residence, it has an exercise yard with security fencing and is a security-oriented facility.

An education-based day program, which includes life skills, is offered in the Centre under contract by Lethbridge Community College. The program is mandatory for all young offenders and incorporates instruction based on individual levels of functioning plus crafts and recreation. A community gymnasium is utilized for sports programs twice weekly and community involvement is encouraged through a volunteer program. Programs through A.A.D.A.C., Native Counselling Services and the Department of Health, Mental Health Division are available on a referral basis through the Centre.

Evening programs at the Centre are group-oriented and vary from day to day in order to provide a balance between physical activities and life skills presentations. The weekend program is designed to enhance daily living skills through cooking programs and major chore assignments. Weekend programming also reflects an opportunity for the group to plan their own activities, thereby promoting group cohesiveness and involvement.

FACTS

Opened: 1975 Department of Social Services 1986 Department of the Solicitor General
Classification: Secure Custody and Temporary Detention

GRANDE PRAIRIE YOUNG OFFENDER CENTRE

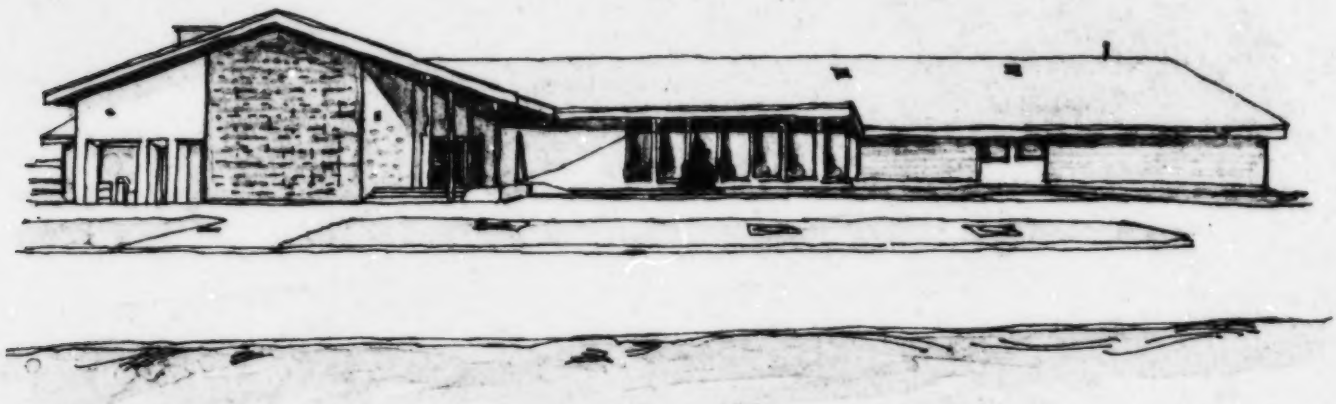
A single story building made up of three units, the Grande Prairie Young Offender Centre was formerly the Grande Prairie Youth Assessment Centre. Immediately following proclamation of the *Young Offenders Act* in 1984, five beds were made available to the Department of the Solicitor General to accommodate the detention of young offenders remanded in custody by the local youth court. In 1986, however, the facility was converted completely to a young offender centre and transferred administratively from the Department of Social Services to the Department of the Solicitor General. It initially housed only those offenders in secure custody and on temporary detention. Recently two units have been converted to open custody.

On-site programs include a comprehensive school program contracted to the City of Grande Prairie School Board which offers industrial arts and hobby crafts and fine arts. A variety of physical activities are conducted on the Centre's outdoor activity pad. While programs within the Centre offer alternatives for residents, the focus of the Centre is on using community resources whenever possible. To this end, some young offenders attend academic upgrading or job skills training in community schools and colleges in preparation for release into the community or transfer to a custody home.

Grande Prairie Young Offender Centre has the highest proportion of native young

offenders of any custodial facility in the province. In order to address the needs of this group, emphasis is placed on native awareness programs utilizing resources both in the Centre and in the community. A sweat lodge is in place on the grounds of the centre and a sweetgrass ceremony takes place each morning. Staff and young offenders are involved in the ceremony.

Cree lessons are part of the educational program as well as native crafts including moccasin making and hide tanning. A liaison worker from Native Counselling Services of Alberta attends the Centre weekly and periodic visits occur by a native elder. Young offenders are encouraged to become involved in native dancing with opportunities to participate in ceremonies in the community. A native Programs Advisory Committee evaluates programs on an ongoing basis in order to enhance services within the Centre and maximize use of community resources.



FACTS

Opened: 1973 Department of Social Services 1986 Department of the Solicitor General
Classification: Open and Secure Custody and Temporary Detention

STRATHMORE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

The Strathmore Youth Development Centre provides custody services in the Town of Strathmore, 50 kilometres east of Calgary. The Centre has four living units or cottages, classrooms, a library, woodworking and automotive shops, gymnasium and an administrative area.

The Strathmore Youth Development Centre houses those offenders who require a greater degree of supervision than is available in a group or custody home, and those who require a period of stabilization in a centre. Strathmore provides various in-centre programs but emphasizes the use of community resources in meeting the needs of young offenders placed there. It is hoped that young offenders will utilize community programs while at the Centre and thus become familiar with those programs which will be available to them upon release.

During their stay at the Centre, young offenders are expected to become involved in educational programs, life skills or vocational training. School programs are administered by the Wheatland County Board of Education. In addition to the above, a two week intensive drug and alcohol program is provided during which participants are involved in group and individual counselling, as well as recreational activities as a group. Strathmore Youth Development Centre also has volunteer and community service programs. A

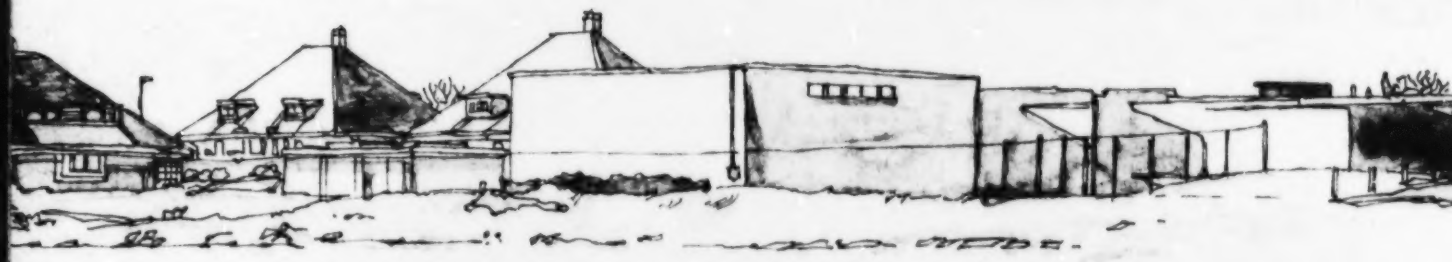
Citizen Advisory Board comprised of local community members is instrumental in providing a valuable link between the Centre and the community of Strathmore.

The Centre has established close links with the nearby Blackfoot Reserve and with the more distant Blood and Peigan Reserves. Casework staff work with Band social workers and agencies in formulating case plans and pre-release plans for native young offenders. Within the Centre, there are regular native cultural awareness weeks, visits from native elders and a native lifeskills program.

FACTS

Opened: 1984

Classification: Open Custody



TEMPORARY DETENTION FACILITIES

Young persons are remanded in custody under the judicial interim release provisions of the *Criminal Code* as a last resort and where no responsible adult is able to care for and exercise control over them. Since young offender centres are located in a limited number of areas, other types of facilities have been designated for this purpose. This ensures that a temporary detention facility is available near the location of the offender's arrest.

In some locations, police cells are used provided that the young person is housed separate and apart from adult offenders. In High Prairie, Fort McMurray and Lac La Biche, a fixed number of beds are available in the local Youth Assessment Centre operated by the Department of Social Services. Also, both the Medicine Hat and Red Deer Remand Centres, also operated by Alberta Correctional Services, have a special young offender unit which is separate from adult living units. These units house young offenders in temporary detention as well as some who are serving short secure custody dispositions.

While housed in a section of an adult remand centre, young offenders have access to the full range of health services plus separate visiting, admission and discharge areas.

OPEN CUSTODY GROUP HOMES

In keeping with the principle of least restrictive intervention, Alberta Correctional Services provides open custody group homes in various locations throughout the province. These facilities have few built-in security features aside from staff supervision, and offer young offenders access to numerous services in the community such as educational or treatment programs and employment opportunities.

Young offenders placed in group homes are selected based on their ability to use community resources and overall behaviour given the limited security restrictions in the facilities. In order to attend day programs or maintain employment in the community, young offenders are issued with a temporary release permit. Open custody group homes play an important part in the reintegration process. Young offenders are encouraged to maintain contact with family and significant others in preparation for full release, either at the end of their disposition or as a result of a successful review application to probation.

Group homes are operated by various agencies under contract to Alberta Correctional Services and range in size from six to twelve beds. One group home in Edmonton and one in Slave Lake are under contract to Native Counselling Services of Alberta and cater specifically to the special needs of native young offenders. Life skills groups are provided as well as alcohol and other drug counselling, and community outings to native cultural events.

TREATMENT FACILITIES

Poundmaker's Adolescent Drug/Alcohol Program is a thirty-bed residential program located in St. Paul, Alberta. The program runs ninety days in duration with continuous intake. At a later date, a day program will be available to accommodate twenty clients on an outpatient basis. The focus of the program is on treating the whole adolescent, spiritually, mentally, physically and emotionally, as an individual and as a member of the family unit. The program focuses on treatment for native youths. Non-native referrals are considered, however, they are expected to participate in all aspects of the program, including the native cultural components.

The Turningpoint Program is a component of forensic services at Alberta Hospital Edmonton. It provides psychiatric assessment for young persons who are referred by the youth court and assessment or treatment services for those given a custodial disposition. Following completion of an assessment by a multidisciplinary team, a case plan is implemented which includes various types of counselling and training. Educational needs of young persons are met through Highwood School which is operated by the Edmonton Public School Board.

Also affiliated with Alberta Hospital Edmonton is the Counterpoint Group Home in Edmonton, an eight bed facility contracted by Alberta Correctional Services. Various types of treatment are offered including a weekly psychiatric clinic group, individual counselling and skills development. While at Counter-

point, residents are required to be involved in a day program such as school, work or life skills. Community resources are accessed for this purpose as well as for the recreational component of the Counterpointprogram.

Contracted psychologists provide in-house and community-based programs for adolescent sex offenders in Calgary. The in-house program operates out of the Calgary Young Offender Centre. Young offenders from other Calgary custody facilities also attend these group sessions. The community groups treatment program allows for continuity and treatment continuation for offenders moving from custody to probation status.

Alberta Correctional Services also uses three assessment beds at William Roper Hull Home in Calgary. Young offenders placed in this treatment facility are integrated into the regular twelve-bed adolescent program. Individual and family therapy are provided along with social skills training such as anger management. An on-site school program offers academic and vocational training.

CUSTODY HOME PROGRAM

The custody home program provides yet another placement option for open custody offenders, one emphasizing a regular family setting. The program also enables young persons to remain closer to their home community and family while providing them with a stable and nurturing environment. Particular efforts are made to recruit custody homes in locations where there are no other custody resources nearby. There is a special focus on finding native custody home parents both on and off reserves.

Upon application to become custody home providers, applicants go through a rigorous screening procedure which includes criminal and reference checks, in depth interviews, and are visited in their homes no fewer than three times by a probation officer who completes the custody home assessment. All residents of the home are interviewed prior to a decision being made. Custody home providers are contracted for usually a maximum of two open custody offenders.

Young offenders who are assessed as having the best opportunity for success are considered for placement in a custody home and are matched up with specific custody home providers. Where possible, prior to placement, the custody home provider and young offender meet and each is given necessary information regarding the other. The young offender must agree to the placement and to abide by the rules and expectations of the placement.

Custody home providers are issued with manuals and given initial and ongoing training arranged by staff of the nearest Community Corrections office. A liaison probation officer is assigned to provide supervision and be available to offer assistance and answer questions in all areas of custody home management.

CONCLUSION

The answer to the problems of young offenders lies in acknowledging the characteristics they have as an age group apart from adults. While they cannot be excused for their illegal behaviours, care must be taken to use the full range of dispositions and programs provided for under *The Young Offenders Act* in dealing with these behaviours.

The means to ensure that the community is protected must not rely only on the use of custody dispositions. While custody is required in some cases, especially for chronic or dangerous offenders, it must be viewed as a period during which the problems which contributed to the offending behaviour can be identified and addressed. This is done with the view to reintegrating the young person into the community.

In the belief that young offenders are best worked with in community settings, Alberta Correctional Services has focused on developing progressive community-based programs and services. In developing and implementing programs and services, Alberta Correctional Services consults with other government departments, professionals, communities and agencies. It is vital that this cooperation continue in order to ensure that both the needs of young offenders and the community are met.

APPENDIX

YOUNG OFFENDER CENTRES

Edmonton Young Offender Centre
18621 - 127 Street
Edmonton, Alberta
T6V 1B1, 457-7717

Calgary Young Offender Centre
85 Street and 118 Avenue N.W.
Bag 3240, Station B, Calgary, Alberta,
T2M 4S9, 239-8111

Lethbridge Young Offender Centre
Box 1867, 402 - 6th Avenue North
Lethbridge, Alberta, T1J 4K5
381-5462

Grande Prairie Young Offender Centre
11007 - 106 Street
Grande Prairie, Alberta, T8V 2Z3
538-5370

Strathmore Youth Development Centre
Box 1650, 630 Westchester Road
Strathmore, Alberta, T0J 3H0
934-5908

TEMPORARY DETENTION/SECURE CUSTODY FACILITIES

High Prairie Youth Assessment Centre
Box 568
High Prairie, Alberta, T0G 1E0
523-4541

Fort McMurray Youth Assessment Centre
451 Sakitawa Trail South
Fort McMurray, Alberta, T9H 3P9
743-7280

Lac La Biche Youth Assessment Centre
Box 1089
Lac La Biche, Alberta, TOA 2C0
623-5266

Medicine Hat Remand Centre
874 - 2nd Street S.E.
Medicine Hat, Alberta, T1A 8H2
529-2111

Red Deer Remand Centre
Bag 5017
Red Deer, Alberta, T4N 6A1
340-7129

GROUP HOMES AND TREATMENT FACILITIES

Catholic Social Services Group Home
12718-20 - 71 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, T5C 0M1
472-0006

Howard House
11310 - 109A Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta, T5H 1G8
420-1497

Kochee Mena
5 - 11745 - 126 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, T5M 0S1
454-1190

Northwood Group Home
12916 - 96 Street
Edmonton, Alberta, T5E 4B1
476-3883

Southwind Group Home
10924 - 60 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta, T6H 1H9
435-5974

Sam Laboucan Centre
Native Counselling Services of Alberta
Box 1037, Slave Lake, Alberta, T0G 2A0
849-2462

Red Deer Group Home
5513 - 60 Street
Red Deer, Alberta, T4N 2P4
346-5666

Enviros Group Home
5121 - 17 Avenue N.W.
Calgary, Alberta, T3B 0P8
288-5104

North Haven Group Home
1340 - 48 Avenue N.W.
Calgary, Alberta, T2K 6B8
282-7329

Counterpoint Group Home
7120 - 78 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta, T6B 0B9
466-0813

Turningpoint Program
Box 307
Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 2J7
472-5590

William Roper Child & Family Services
2266 Woodpark Avenue S.W.
Calgary, Alberta, T2W 2Z8
281-2266

Poundmaker's Lodge
Adolescent Drug and Alcohol Treatment Program
St. Paul Correctional Centre
4637 - 45 Avenue P.O. Box 2740
St. Paul, Alberta, T0A 3A0
645-5456